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ABSTRACT

This report provides statistical data on enrollment patterns of first-time beginning postsecondary students for academic years 1989-1990 and 1995-1996. It notes that in 1995-1996, about 40 percent of all first-time beginning postsecondary students enrolled in four-year institutions (25 percent at public institutions and 15 percent at private institutions); another 46 percent enrolled in public two-year institutions. Overall, these percentages were the same as those for 1989-1990. In 1995-1996, 25 percent of financially dependent students from families with incomes of $60,000 or more enrolled in private four-year institutions, a considerably higher percentage than the rate for students from families with incomes in the $30,000-$59,999 range (16 percent), or for those with incomes of less than $30,000 (14 percent). Among students enrolling in less-than-four-year institutions, the primary reason cited by 18- to 19-year-olds was the ability to transfer to a four-year institution, while students age 20 and older enrolled to obtain job skills. (MDM)

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INDICATOR OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Enrollment patterns of first-time beginning postsecondary students

September 1999

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Enrollment patterns of first-time beginning postsecondary students

Individuals deciding to pursue postsecondary education have a number of options. They can choose, for example, to enroll in a short-term vocational program offered at a less-than-2-year institution, an associate degree program at a 2-year college, or a bachelor's degree program at a public or private 4-year institution. Alternatively, they can enroll in courses to earn a certificate, develop job skills, or pursue personal interests. Enrollment patterns provide an indication of how students are using the postsecondary education system.

- In 1995–96, about 40 percent of all first-time beginning postsecondary students enrolled in 4-year institutions (25 percent at public institutions and 15 percent at private, not-for-profit institutions). Another 46 percent enrolled in public 2-year institutions. The overall enrollment pattern of 1995–96 first-time beginners resembles that of their 1989–90 counterparts.
- In 1995–96, 25 percent of financially dependent students from families with incomes of $60,000 or more enrolled in private, not-for-profit 4-year institutions, a considerably higher percentage than that for students from families with incomes in the $30,000–59,999 range (16 percent) or with incomes less than $30,000 (14 percent).
- Among students who enrolled in less-than-4-year institutions, the primary reasons for enrolling varied by age. For example, 18- to 19-year-olds were more likely to cite transferring to a 4-year institution as their primary reason for enrolling, while students age 20 or older were more likely to cite obtaining job skills as their primary reason for enrolling.

Percentage distribution of first-time beginning postsecondary students, by type of institution, primary reason for enrolling in a less-than-4-year institution, and selected student and institutional characteristics: Academic years 1989–90 and 1995–96

	Type of institution					Primary reason for enrolling in a less-than-4-year institution			
Selected student and institutional characteristics	Public 4-year	Public 2-year	Private, not-for-profit 4-year	Private, for-profit	Other	Obtain job skills	Earn degree or certificate	Transfer to a 4-year institution	Other
Academic year 1989–90									
Total	**27.6**	**44.8**	**13.2**	**10.4**	**4.0**	—	—	—	—
Academic year 1995–96									
Total	**25.4**	**45.7**	**14.5**	**11.3**	**3.2**	**33.0**	**20.3**	**28.9**	**17.8**
Dependency status and income									
Dependent, less than $30,000	30.0	43.3	14.4	9.7	2.6	25.2	24.1	31.5	19.2
Dependent, $30,000 to $59,999	30.1	47.0	16.4	4.6	2.0	21.5	18.6	41.0	18.9
Dependent, $60,000 or more	37.3	34.3	24.8	2.5	1.2	13.2	16.3	56.0	14.5
Independent, less than $10,000	8.6	46.4	4.7	34.9	5.4	50.3	18.4	14.6	16.8
Independent, $10,000 or more	7.1	61.8	4.1	19.9	7.1	50.9	22.4	8.4	18.4
Age as of 12/31/95									
18–19	32.5	41.2	18.9	5.7	1.7	20.2	20.3	43.2	16.3
20–23	19.0	48.6	7.8	19.8	4.9	39.2	23.5	17.1	20.1
24 or older	6.7	58.0	4.3	24.0	7.0	54.4	18.8	8.1	18.6
Type of institution									
Public 2-year	—	100.0	—	—	—	22.6	21.4	36.7	19.3
Private, for-profit	—	—	—	100.0	—	69.0	16.6	1.3	13.0

— Not available or not applicable.

NOTE: Details may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS: 90/94) and 1995–96 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:96).

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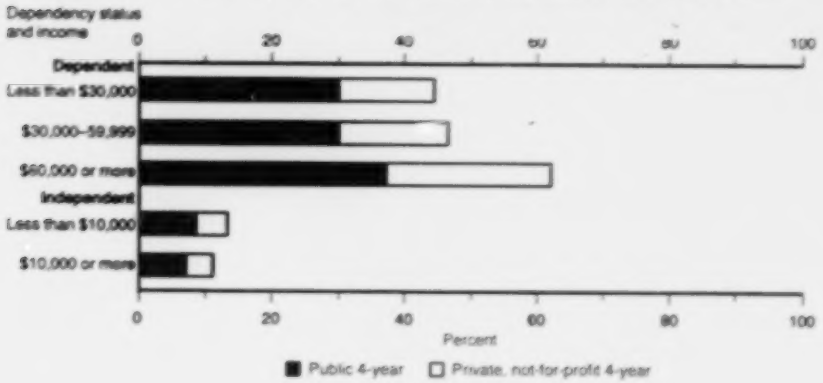
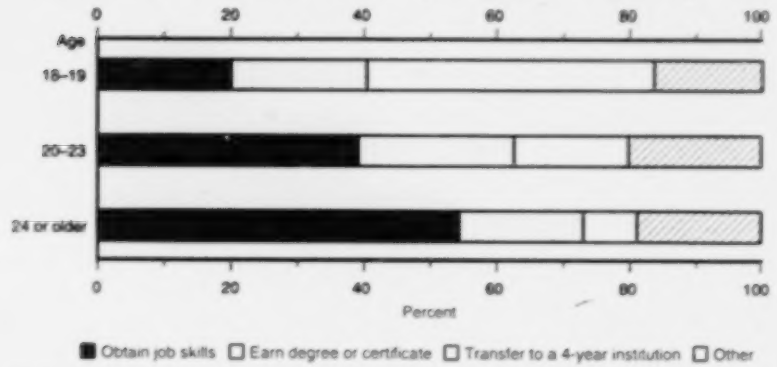
Patterns of enrollment among first-time beginning postsecondary students: Academic year 1995–96

Percentage of first-time beginning postsecondary students enrolling in public and private, not-for-profit 4-year institutions, by dependency status and income



Percentage distribution of first-time beginning postsecondary students in less-than-4-year institutions, by primary reason for enrolling and age



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1995–96 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:96).

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